



# State of Louisiana

## Department of Environmental Quality



M.J. "Mike" Foster  
Governor

L. Hall Bohlinger  
Secretary

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### **Environmental Notification**

#### **DEQ Takes Steps to Curb Ozone Exceedances in Baton Rouge Area**

(Baton Rouge) – Labeling it a “crucial step to safeguard the health and also the economy of our area,” Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Secretary, L. Hall Bohlinger, signed into effect an emergency rule that lowers the reporting threshold of certain ozone causing hydrocarbons. Starting on August 12, 2003 certain hydrocarbon emissions, that industry is already required to report such as propylene, ethylene and several others will be lowered from 5,000 lbs. to 100 lbs. Recent studies have shown these particular chemicals are highly reactive and have been shown to cause rapid ozone formation.

The emergency rule applies to business and industry operating in the parishes of Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Livingston and West Baton Rouge as well as Pointe Coupee, West Feliciana, St. James, St. Charles and St. John the Baptist. These parishes were included due to a large number of industrial facilities with a potential to release hydrocarbon emissions that can cause an adverse effect on air quality in Baton Rouge and surrounding areas.

In the past two years, DEQ officials observed “explosive ozone formation” episodes during atmospheric conditions that typically do not lead to exceedances of the federal ozone standard. Two episodes, occurring in September 2002, and as recently as July 2003, led to violations of the one-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard promulgated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is established at 125 parts per billion. The ozone readings for the two separate episodes were 164 and 174 parts per billion respectively.

“We need to protect the public,” said Secretary Bohlinger. “As the [emergency] rule clearly states, we need additional information regarding the emissions of these highly reactive ozone precursors to understand, predict and prevent further exceedances of the ozone standard.” The Secretary also expressed concerns over possible economic pressures the area will have to withstand if the Baton Rouge area fails to meet the standard for ozone this season, such as paying higher prices for reformulated gasoline, which will have little environmental benefit at a large cost to the public.

Ozone is one of six criteria air pollutants used by EPA to measure air quality and for which federal standards have been set. With the exception of the Greater Baton Rouge area, the rest of the state is in attainment for all six. The Greater Baton Rouge area is in attainment for five of the six criteria air pollutants, but has not yet met the federal standard for ozone. While ozone in the earth’s upper atmosphere helps protect us from the sun’s harmful rays, ground-level ozone is potentially harmful to human health. Ozone is not emitted from a stationary source. It is formed on hot, stagnant air days and can be harmful to individuals that suffer from respiratory illnesses such as asthma.

The emergency rule can be downloaded from [www.deq.state.la.us/planning/regs/index.htm](http://www.deq.state.la.us/planning/regs/index.htm).